

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES

NEPA and Department of the Army regulations 32 CFR Part 651 establish that the alternatives analysis conducted for an EA must include “appropriate consideration of the ‘No Action’ alternative, the ‘Proposed Action’, and all other appropriate and reasonable alternatives that can be realistically accomplished”. The following discussion describes the alternatives analyzed in this EA, and the process by which they were identified.

2.1 Alternatives Identification Process

The transfer of the WAPTF property from USARAK to the Port is primarily an administrative action. The completion of the transfer would facilitate minor alteration of existing facilities, as described below, but it would not directly involve any large-scale plan of development. Based on these factors, the only “reasonable alternatives that can be realistically accomplished” (32 CFR Part 651, 2002) are the Proposed Action and taking No Action.

2.2 Alternatives Selected for Detailed Analysis

The chief criteria for deciding whether or not to carry an identified alternative forward for detailed analysis is whether the alternative meets the stated purpose and need (see Section 1.2). Alternative 1: Transfer WAPTF Property to the Port meets the stated purpose and need. Alternative 2: No Action does not meet the stated purpose and need.

2.2.1 Alternative 1: Transfer WAPTF Property to the Port of Anchorage

Alternative 1 is the Proposed Action, and it meets the stated purpose and need. It involves the transfer, from USARAK to the Port, of “all right, title, and interest...in and to” (S.1438.ENR, 2002) the WAPTF property. This transfer of ownership would secure the capital improvements the Port has made to the portion of the WAPTF property that they currently lease (see Section 1.2). In addition, the property conveyance would enable the Port to pursue future plans it may take on for expansion on the WAPTF property.

An additional component of Alternative 1 is any reasonably foreseeable improvements (as defined in Section 1.4) that would directly follow and would be facilitated by the completion of the property transfer. There are two planned improvements that meet this definition.

The first reasonably foreseeable improvement for the WAPTF property includes grading, drainage enhancement, and paving in the area directly east of security Checkpoint 3. The approximate extent of the planned improvements is shown on Figure 2, and totals roughly 1.6 acres in area. Under current conditions, storm water draining off of the nearby slopes of the WAPTF property collects in this area, causing flooding in the summer months and glaciation in the winter (Figure 3). These deficiencies hinder the Port’s ability to utilize this area. In addition they threaten the capital improvements already in place from the road and rail extension, namely the adjacent railroad tracks. After the Port takes



Figure 3: Flooding and glaciation east of security Checkpoint 3, March, 2006.

possession of the WAPTF property, they would address the problem by grading the area, connecting it to the Port's existing storm drain system, and paving the surface. It would be finished with additional site lighting, and would then be used as a transit yard for material storage.

The second reasonably foreseeable improvement for the WAPTF property would involve the construction by the Port of an administrative office building with adjacent paved parking areas, and an access road from the Port side, all of which would replace the existing Port office facilities currently located on the main transit dock. The administrative building project is still in the conceptual design phase, but funding for its continued design and construction has already been secured through the Municipality of Anchorage. The structures would likely be located on the middle portion of the WAPTF property, the area defined later in Section 3.4.1 as the Slope Deposits Area. The paved exterior parking areas would likely primarily be located on the area later defined in Section 3.4.1 as the Upper Bluff Area. Their potential locations are still in the planning stages. As currently envisioned, the site work required for the office building, paved parking areas, and the access road would impact roughly 3.5 acres of the WAPTF property.

As a possible condition of the WAPTF property transfer, the Port may assume some responsibility for environmental contamination liabilities associated with the property. The Port may also maintain joint responsibility with the Army for environmental liabilities, however this issue remains to be decided. In either case, the environmental contamination liabilities associated with the property would remain an issue to be addressed by one or both of the two parties in accordance with the ROD, and as dictated by the legal transfer documentation. The contamination liabilities are summarized below, and are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.6, Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste.

Summary of Environmental Contamination Considerations

Nearly the entire WAPTF property was used as a bulk fuel storage facility and distribution center until its closure as such in 1996. Numerous releases of petroleum products have been documented at the property, and it has had several environmental site characterizations, remediation efforts, and monitoring events. All fuel storage tanks, buildings, and related infrastructure and support facilities have been removed, with the following exceptions. There are records of two active underground fuel pipelines that still exist on the WAPTF property. These are the Elmendorf South Jet POL pipeline, which supplies jet fuel to EAFB from Chevron's aboveground storage tanks located at their Port facility, and the Anchorage Fueling and Service Company Cross-Town pipeline. Numerous other pipelines have either been removed or abandoned in place by purging and capping. Their general locations and current status are described in the SEBS recently completed for the site (R&M, 2006). Remedial efforts for the WAPTF property have included the removal of petroleum-contaminated soils, which were taken off-site and replaced with clean backfill.

Previous site characterizations indicate that soil and groundwater contamination still remains. Currently, the groundwater is being monitored on a semi-annual basis to determine if the dissolved contamination plume is steady state or shrinking, to assess whether it is migrating off-site, and to determine if the contaminant concentrations are decreasing. These controls are detailed in the 2003 Record of Decision (ROD) that was signed for the site (ADEC and DESC, 2003), and are also described in Section 3.6, Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste. It should be noted that risks to human health have been identified by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) within the WAPTF property. These risks have been predicted only for the site worker who may be subject to prolonged dermal exposure to diesel range organics (DRO) in the groundwater and smear zone soils. As such, future site workers who could be in contact with the groundwater need to be made aware of the contamination and provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment.

2.2.2 Alternative 2: No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, USARAK would not transfer the WAPTF property to the Port. The Army would retain ownership of the WAPTF property, and would continue to be liable for the ongoing groundwater monitoring and compliance with the ROD. No new areas would be opened to facilitate future economic development at the Port. Current conditions would continue to apply, and the Port would continue to be constrained in potential future expansion efforts by the limited availability of land. Although required for analysis under NEPA, the No Action alternative would not meet the purpose and need.

2.3 Summary of Environmental Consequences

Table 1 provides a brief summary of the environmental consequences associated with the two alternatives. Given the low level of potential impacts from the Proposed Action, mitigation

measures have not been included in the assessment of environmental consequences for this EA. Section 3 includes a detailed analysis of each impact category. The following qualitative terms are defined for use in Table 1.

- None – No impacts
- Minor – Low level adverse impacts that are temporary in duration
- Moderate – Adverse impacts that are measurable and not temporary
- Severe – Significant adverse impacts with permanent effects on resources
- Beneficial – Impacts that are expected to positively affect resources

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Resource Categories	POTENTIAL IMPACTS	
	Alternative 1: Proposed Action	Alternative 2: No Action
Soils and Geology	Minor	None
Water and Drainage	None	None
Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste	None	None
Land Use and Transportation	Beneficial	None
Socioeconomics	Minor	None
Air Quality	Minor	None
Noise	Minor	None
Public Access	Beneficial	None
Visual Resources	Moderate	None